

Claim Amendments

Claims 1 and 14 were amended in the Reply of August 20, 2002 to more clearly indicate that there is no intermediate drying step present in the instant invention (before step d)). The Examiner indicated in the Advisory Action of August 30, 2002 that these amendments might potentially be new matter. Applicants vigorously traverse. The amendment to claims 1 and 14 were formal amendments that are non-narrowing in scope, which have support in original claim 1, and these amendments are consistent with the arguments presented in the response of May 20, 2002 on page 9. Thus, Applicants submit that these amendments are not new matter.

Accordingly, because Leblans '578 (U.S. Patent No. 5,360,578) includes an intermediate drying step, the rejections of claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-10, 12, 14-15, and 17-20 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Leblans '578 (US Patent No. 5,360,578), of claims 4 and 16 as being unpatentable over Leblans '578 in view of Jamil '916 (US Patent No. 5,772,916), of claims 8 and 13 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Leblans '578 in view of Ochiai '971 (US Patent No. 4,501,971) and of claim 11 as being unpatentable over Leblans '578 in view of Hultsch '454 (US Patent No. 4,405,454) are inapposite.

Withdrawal of the rejections is warranted and respectfully requested.

With the above remarks, it is believed that the claims, as they now stand, define patentable subject matter such that a passage of the instant invention to allowance is warranted. A Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If any questions remain regarding the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, T. Benjamin Schroeder (Reg. No. 50,990), in the Washington metropolitan area at the phone number listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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